

Filed for intro on 11/04/99

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 8 of the Second Extraordinary Session
By Bowers

A RESOLUTION to recognize Reverend William A. Suggs on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable Tennesseans who through their adroit service in the ministry have dedicated their lives and personal excellence to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, William A. Suggs is one such distinguished citizen who radiates God's love and evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Suggs was born the fifth of ten children to Mr. and Mrs. Emmett Suggs of Capleville, who were engaged in sharecropping; his early life was marked by poverty in material things but richness in love and ambition; and

WHEREAS, William Suggs attended public schools in Shelby County and upon graduating from Geeter High School in 1942, enrolled in Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where he completed one quarter before being inducted into the U.S. Army; and

WHEREAS, he served his country bravely and with distinction from 1943-45, landing on Utah beach in Normandy on the third day of the Allied invasion; for his gallantry he received the World War II Victory Medal, the Croix de Guerre, the European African Middle Eastern Ribbon with two Bronze Stars and the Good Conduct Medal; and

WHEREAS, in 1946 Mr. Suggs enrolled at Tennessee State University and received his Bachelor of Science Degree in August of 1949; while a student there, he served two years as

President and Regional Director of the New Farmers of America, campaign manager in two "Miss TSU" campaigns, and later, in 1955, as President of the Graduate Class; and

WHEREAS, William A. Suggs thereafter accepted a position as a teacher of veterans and supervisor in Holmes County, Mississippi. There he met Miss Cornelia Tate and married this exceptional lady in 1953; he then began his pursuit of a Master of Science Degree in Education Administration with a minor in History and Social Studies; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Suggs has always been a faithful servant of God, and in 1956 he answered the call to the ministry and was ordained in 1957 at his membership church, Center Chapel Baptist Church of Capleville; and

WHEREAS, in 1958 William became Assistant Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, under the leadership of the late F. R. Nelson, and in 1961 he became the Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, where he continues to lead the grateful congregation; and

WHEREAS, as Pastor, Reverend Suggs initiated the Annual Friends' Day in 1961; he has also instituted "Youth Period" as a part of Sunday worship, in which young people gather at the altar with Bibles in hand to read Scripture, offer prayers and listen to words of wisdom particularly tailored for their concerns; and

WHEREAS, a native of Shelby County and a longtime resident of Memphis, the Reverend William A. Suggs is a highly respected member of his community; he is a member of the Memphis Education Association, the West Tennessee Education Association, the Tennessee Education Association, the National Council of Social Studies, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Better Schools Committee, and the Parent Teacher Association, having served as President of the Memphis and Shelby County PTAs; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Suggs served as a faculty member at Hamilton High School until his retirement in 1984; he was an Executive Staff member of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association, Hi-Y Advisor, Student Council Advisor, Devotional Leader from 1957 through 1972,

a member of the Principal's Advisory Board, Teacher and Chairman of the Social Studies Department, Coordinator of the Adopt-A-School Program and Coach of the Elks Oratorical Contest for 20 years, winning 15 city, 9 state, 4 regional and 3 national contests. He has been selected "Teacher of the Year"; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure as Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, and in his teaching career, Mr. Suggs has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and an exceptional asset to his community; he was the recipient of the Elks Hall of Fame Award in 1993; having won more oratorical contests than anyone in the history of that organization, the recipient of the 1997 "Father of the Year" Award, and the recipient of the 1997 Bluff City Medical Society Award for Community Education; and

WHEREAS, utilizing his organizational talents, Reverend Suggs worked assiduously to create the W. A. Suggs Scholarship Association after his retirement from high school teaching in 1984, initiated a Spiritual Enrichment Class for young ministers and non-pastors in 1991, and founded the Bluff City Christian College of Memphis, where he serves as President; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend William A. Suggs' outstanding career as a dynamic and compassionate pastor and a gifted and dedicated educator and civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on God's grace and the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, an unwavering commitment to the work of his Creator and Savior, the betterment of the lives of his congregation, the education of the youth of Memphis and Shelby County and indeed, the welfare of all of humanity are hallmarks of the life and career of William A. Suggs. Such a life is most worthy of special recognition by this legislative body and the people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, That we extend to Reverend William A. Suggs our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.